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DIPLOMATS WORLD

The Only Diplomatic Magazine in Bangladesh

**The Resplendent Dawn:
Pohela Boishakh's Cultural Symphony Unveiled**

The Foreign Policy of Bangabandhu is Indeed
our Path to Global Friendship

Beyond Horizons: The U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy
for a Resilient Tomorrow

Fostering Inclusive Democracy: Reflections from Dhaka





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Phone : +88 09610 110 220-5
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CORPORATE OFFICE:
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10/2 Arambag, Motijheel, Dhaka-1000,
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House no- 322 (Ground Floor),
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Address: House-58, Road-03, Block-B, Niketon Society Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 024881 2430, Hotline: +880 1972344788, email: info@diplomats.news
www.diplomats.news

Founder & Fmr. Editor

Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP

Fmr. Foreign Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GoB

Editor

Shahed Akhtar

Ambassador & Fmr. Secretary, GoB

Executive Editor

Nazinur Rahim

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AKM Sayedad Hossain

Assistant Editor

Md. Aynul Hoque

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Creative Editor

Lutfun Nahar Taposhi

Creative and Multimedia Editor

Bably Yasmin

Contributing Editor

Ayesha S Chowdhury

Co-ordinator

Sheikh Nazia Hasan

Contributors

Dr. A.K Abdul Momen, MP

H.E. Peter D. Haas

Mr. Fahd Bin Zahed

Siti Nugraha Mauludiah

AKM Sayedad Hossain

Mahbub Saber

Syed Atique

Shahed Akhtar

Design & Layout

Afifa Mahjabeen

Publisher

Nazinur Rahim

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"Diplomats World" extends its heartfelt greetings to our esteemed readers, marking the joyous occasions of Eid ul Fitr and Nobo Borsho, the Bengali New Year 1431. These celebrations represent the vibrant cultural heritage of Bangladesh, with the Nobo Borsho festivities encompassing musical tributes to the New Year at Ramna Batala in Dhaka and other venues nationwide, including Bangladesh Missions abroad. The day serves as a catalyst for social cohesion and collective well-being.

During this period, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina conveyed messages underscoring the significance of Eid and Nobo Borsho for the nation's prosperity and unity. Furthermore, the solemn observance of Mujib Nagar Day on April 17th resonated throughout Bangladesh, reflecting the nation's reverence for its history and principles.

In recent diplomatic engagements, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Thailand, at the invitation of Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin, fostered discussions on bilateral and regional matters, emphasizing trade enhancement, public-private collaboration, and investment facilitation. Addressing the UNESCO, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina advocated for a new peace agenda, stressing the imperative of mutual respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, particularly in resolving the Rohingya crisis.

Highlighting the evolving dynamics of regional diplomacy, the visit of Emir Sheikh Tamim of Qatar marked a pivotal moment amidst the Israel-Iran conflict. Prime Minister Hasina's talks with the Emir resulted in collaborative efforts spanning trade, investment, defense, education, and regional stability, underlining a shared commitment to dialogue-driven conflict resolution. Notably, agreements and MoUs were exchanged, signaling strengthened ties.

Further diversifying diplomatic engagements, Bangladesh welcomed high-level visits, including Russia's atomic energy agency Rosatom, and exploring the prospect of setting up of the second nuclear plant in Rooppur .

Also the visit of Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira and discussions with the Bangladesh Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud MP encompassed Bangladesh's interest and its aspirations for BRICS membership, demonstrating the nation's strategic vision and commitment to global partnerships.

In this month's issue, "Diplomats World" delves into pertinent topics such as Climate Diplomacy, the Indo-Pacific strategy, inclusive diplomacy, the visit of the King of Bhutan to Bangladesh, the Rohingya issue, and the cultural significance of Pohela Boishakh, offering insightful perspectives for our discerning readership.

Shahed Akhtar
Ambassador & Fmr. Secretary, GoB
and Editor, Diplomats World Publication

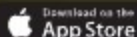
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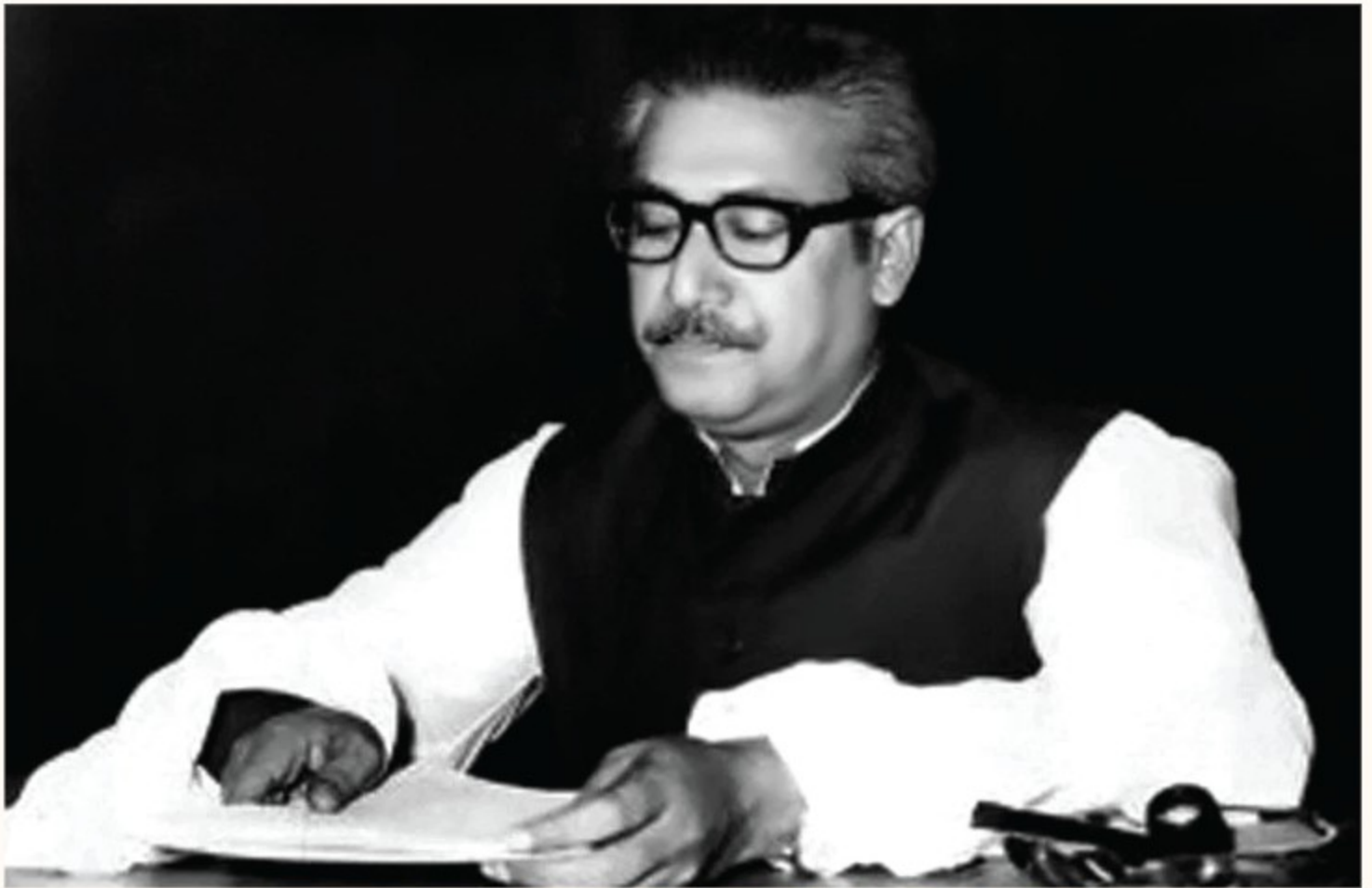


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THE FOREIGN POLICY OF BANGABANDHU IS INDEED OUR PATH TO GLOBAL FRIENDSHIP

-Dr. A.K Abdul Momen, MP

The birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman falls on March 17. Born 104 years ago, he holds the esteemed title of being the greatest Bengali of all time. Despite being a Bengali, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman transcended borders to become a beacon of leadership for oppressed peoples worldwide. Even today, individuals from various countries around the globe remember his name with profound respect.

During the Non-Aligned Conference, Bangabandhu had a memorable encounter with the legendary Cuban leader, Fidel Castro. Reflecting on their meeting, Castro remarked, "I have not seen the Himalayas, but I have seen Bangabandhu. He is a leader with a heart as vast as the Himalayas." Such sentiments underscore the profound impact Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had on global leaders. His legacy continues to be honored worldwide, ensuring that he remains revered with enduring respect across nations.

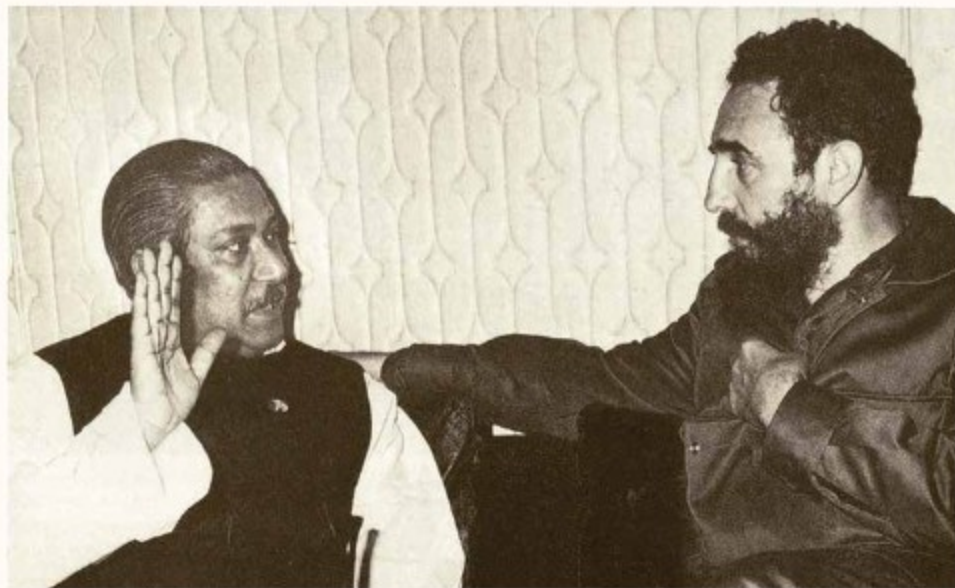
Assessing the impact of a towering figure like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman within a limited framework is a daunting task. Bangabandhu's legacy transcends mere evaluation; he was the architect of a nation and the catalyst for the liberation of millions. His unwavering commitment to freedom ignited the spirits of Bengalis, leading them to achieve independence after centuries of oppression. Bangabandhu endured immense hardships, including prolonged imprisonment, in his relentless

pursuit of Bengali liberation. Yet, amidst adversity, he never wavered in his dedication to his principles and the interests of his people. His steadfastness in upholding Bengali rights and his unwavering resolve exemplify the epitome of leadership and sacrifice.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's character was truly noble and compassionate, particularly towards the less fortunate. His dedication to

it's evident that no Bengali figure has emerged who can match or even come close to his stature. It remains uncertain whether such a figure will arise in the future. Bangabandhu possessed clarity of thought on various subjects and articulated his ideas with unwavering conviction regardless of the setting. While he valued the advice of others, he ultimately made decisions based on his own judgment. To my knowledge, he never made a

of the country, recognizing its paramount importance. Understanding that economic development was crucial for a nation emerging from the throes of conflict, Bangabandhu prioritized fostering bilateral relations with countries across the globe. He acknowledged that creating strong alliances was imperative for Bangladesh's recovery and progress, realizing that there was no alternative to building positive relationships with all nations in order to facilitate the country's economic development and growth.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro

servicing the people was evident in his efficient handling of state responsibilities, despite the brevity of his tenure. I had the privilege of closely observing Bangabandhu, having come into contact with him during my student years. He embodied the qualities of a pragmatic visionary leader, unafraid to take bold steps for the betterment of ordinary citizens. His unwavering commitment to the welfare of the common people remains an enduring aspect of his legacy.

Having observed Bangabandhu closely over an extended period,

wrong decision under the influence of external pressures. Despite having interacted with Bangabandhu on multiple occasions and gaining insight into his character, I recognise the challenge of fully encapsulating his life's entirety. Therefore, I will endeavor to shed light on certain aspects of his foreign policy in my presentation.

Following the independence of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returned to lead a nation ravaged by war. His immediate focus was on the reconstruction

In a short span of three and a half years, Bangladesh, under the charismatic leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, achieved widespread recognition from the majority of countries worldwide. This feat was largely attributable to Bangabandhu's dynamic leadership style and ability to garner broad acceptance on the international stage. As a result, governments across the globe began to acknowledge Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. Central to Bangabandhu's foreign policy was the principle of "friendship with all, enmity with none," a guiding philosophy that sought to cultivate positive relationships with all nations while avoiding conflicts.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman not only crafted an exemplary foreign policy but also effectively implemented it during his tenure. His vision continues to guide Bangladesh's foreign relations today. The essence of this policy revolves around maintaining friendly ties with all nations and refraining from hostility. Even with

countries where bilateral relations may face challenges, Bangladesh remains committed to seeking avenues for improvement. Bangladesh prioritizes the development of bilateral relations with any country while safeguarding its self-respect and national interests.

After Bangladesh's independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman orchestrated the swift return of Indian allied forces to their homeland in less than three months. Their departure on March 12, 1972, stands as an unprecedented example globally. This remarkable feat was made possible through Bangabandhu's visionary leadership and diplomatic acumen. His strategic approach and adept diplomacy facilitated the smooth transition.

Bangabandhu's adept application of the foreign policy principle of "friendship to all, malice to none" is exemplified by Bangladesh's stance during the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) conference held in Pakistan in 1974. Despite being invited to participate, Bangladesh refused to attend until Pakistan officially recognized Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. Despite Pakistan's initial reluctance to recognize Bangladesh, they swiftly

granted formal recognition in response to Bangabandhu's firm stance. Subsequently, the foreign ministers of three Muslim countries arrived in Bangladesh to present the recognition certificate from Pakistan to Bangabandhu. With this diplomatic breakthrough, Bangladesh participated in the OIC conference alongside Bangabandhu.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman faced considerable internal pressure and received advice from friendly nations urging him not to attend the OIC conference in Pakistan. Despite these pressures, Bangabandhu remained resolute in his decision. He recognized the importance of attending the conference not only for normalizing Bangladesh's bilateral relations with Muslim countries but also for facilitating Pakistan's official recognition of Bangladesh. Had Bangabandhu not attended the OIC conference in Pakistan, the process of normalizing relations and achieving recognition would have been significantly more challenging for Bangladesh.

Indeed, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's participation in the OIC conference was pivotal

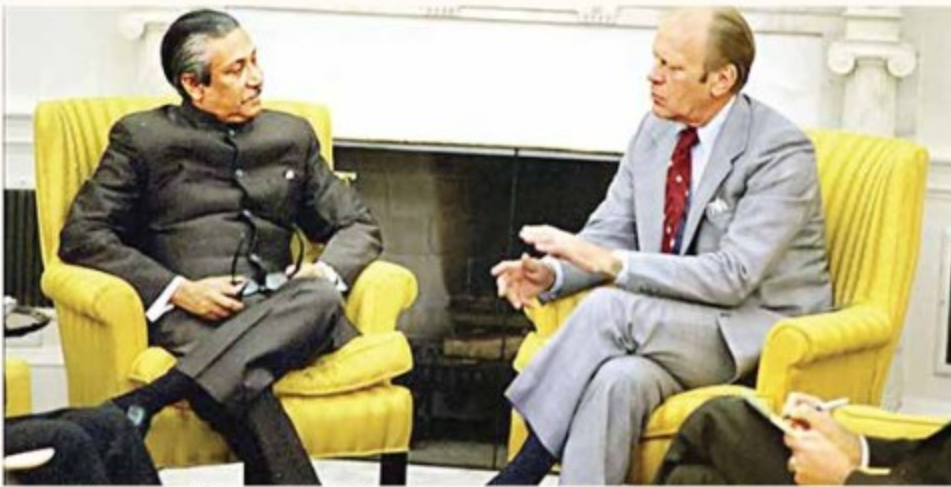
in normalizing bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Muslim countries, despite initial alignments with Pakistan during Bangladesh's independence movement. By attending the conference, Bangabandhu seized the opportunity to advocate for Bangladesh's interests directly to heads of state from Muslim-majority nations. This platform allowed him to address crucial issues, including the economic assistance owed to Bangladesh from its former entity, Pakistan.

The principle of "friendship to all, malice towards none" served as the cornerstone of Bangladesh's foreign policy, a sentiment prominently underscored during the OIC conference. Bangladesh's participation in the conference held in Lahore during the War of Independence played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between Bangladesh and Muslim-majority nations. By actively engaging in the conference and advocating for its interests, Bangladesh effectively conveyed its commitment to fostering friendly relations with all nations, regardless of past differences.

The foundational ideals of Bangladesh's foreign policy were not crafted after independence. During the 1970 National Assembly elections, Bangabandhu reiterated multiple times that our foreign policy would prioritize friendship with all nations and avoid enmity with any. This suggests that Bangabandhu had developed the core ideology of his foreign policy well in advance, indicating thoughtful planning and foresight.



Foreign Policy of Bangabandhu



US President Gerald Ford hosted Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the White House on October 1, 1974

Bangabandhu's call for the trial of 195 war criminals by Pakistan authorities, coupled with his vision of Bangladesh as the "Switzerland of the East" committed to regional peace, further underscored his dedication to justice and stability. At the OIC conference, Bangabandhu emerged as a key proponent of peace, highlighting his active role in promoting harmony within the Muslim world and beyond.

After attaining independence, Bangabandhu placed significant emphasis on fostering bilateral relations with various countries worldwide for several reasons. Firstly, Bangladesh's economy was in a precarious state following the war, necessitating assistance from the international community to facilitate recovery. Bangabandhu adeptly navigated this challenge, securing support from diverse nations and achieving remarkable success in rebuilding Bangladesh's economy.

Despite expectations that Bangladesh might align with the Soviet bloc due to support received during the liberation

war from India and the Soviet Union, Bangabandhu demonstrated a commitment to non-alignment. Instead of favoring any particular bloc, he prioritized the welfare of the Bangladeshi people and pursued initiatives to establish bilateral relations with countries, including those that had opposed Bangladesh during the independence struggle, such as the United States.

By adopting a pragmatic and inclusive approach to foreign relations, Bangabandhu sought to ensure Bangladesh's sovereignty, stability, and prosperity, transcending ideological divides for the greater benefit of the nation. His diplomatic efforts contributed significantly to shaping Bangladesh's position on the global stage and fostering constructive relationships with nations across the world.

Indeed, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's decision-making was always guided by pragmatism rather than emotion. He prioritized the interests of Bangladesh and its people, grounded in reality. His strategic approach to foreign

relations proved instrumental in securing crucial benefits for the country, particularly in international trade.

Bangabandhu's initiatives to develop relations with the United States of America and European Union countries after independence yielded significant dividends. The United States granted Bangladesh quotas in trade, while the European Union provided Bangladesh with the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), offering duty-free trade benefits. These facilities played a pivotal role in facilitating Bangladesh's success in international trade.

Had Bangabandhu not taken the proactive step to cultivate relations with these key partners, Bangladesh would likely have missed out on these vital trade benefits.

Bangabandhu's declaration of Bangladesh as a non-aligned country exemplified his commitment to independence and sovereignty, emphasizing that Bangladesh would not align with any particular bloc or alliance. Despite the United States opposing Bangladesh during the liberation war, Bangabandhu demonstrated remarkable statesmanship by meeting with US President Gerald Ford and seeking assistance for Bangladesh's development.

This aspect of Bangabandhu's character highlights his pragmatic approach to international relations, where decisions were guided solely by the interests of the state and its people. His ability to set aside



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei while visiting Japan in 1973

past conflicts and engage constructively with former adversaries showcased his diplomatic finesse and unwavering dedication to Bangladesh's progress.

Bangabandhu's steadfastness and resolute character ensured that he never wavered from making decisions that were in the best interest of the country and its citizens.

As the permanent representative of Bangladesh at the United Nations, I once found myself in a conversation with the permanent representative of the United States. During this interaction, the US representative expressed curiosity about how Bangladesh consistently garnered such significant support and votes. It happened during an election

where both the United States and Bangladesh were candidates, and yet Bangladesh received the highest number of votes.

In response, I attributed our success to the visionary directive laid out by our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I explained that Bangabandhu's guiding principle in foreign policy was clear: "friendship with all, enmity with none." This principle has been at the core of Bangladesh's approach to international relations, and it resonates deeply with nations across the world.

By adhering steadfastly to this principle, Bangladesh has earned respect and admiration on the global stage. Our

commitment to fostering positive relationships and cooperation with all nations, regardless of differences or past conflicts, has been instrumental in garnering support and trust from the international community.

Indeed, the principle of "friendship with all, enmity with none" has been instrumental in garnering support for Bangladesh on the international stage. By maintaining positive and constructive relations with all nations, Bangladesh has effectively cultivated a network of allies and partners. This approach has enabled Bangladesh to navigate diplomatic challenges successfully and secure victories in various international forums.

During my tenure as Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, I had the privilege of overseeing approximately 52 elections, all of which resulted in victories for Bangladesh. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the widespread trust and confidence that Bangladesh enjoys among the international community. The guiding principles set forth by Bangabandhu in our foreign policy have proven invaluable in nurturing bilateral relations with various countries on the global stage, contributing significantly to our international endeavors.

Dr. A.K Abdul Momen, MP
PhD & MBA (USA), MPA (Harvard),
LLB, MA, BA (Hons), Dhaka University
Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GoB

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OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES: REFLECTS ON TWO YEARS IN BANGLADESH

-H.E. Peter D. Haas

My country's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, once said, "The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time." As I begin my third year as U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, these words ring true – each day, I remain impressed by the potential of the country, by the energy and resiliency of its people, and by its vibrant civil society.

As I said last year, Bangladesh has come a very long way from

its beginnings. As I look to the future – a future that comes one day at a time – I see opportunity, but also significant challenges. Prior to the January 7, 2024 parliamentary election, the United States advocated publicly for a free and fair election that would reflect the democratic aspirations of the people of Bangladesh.

This did not happen. The United States still cares deeply

about democracy – in Bangladesh and elsewhere. Quite simply, we believe democracy is the best way to achieve enduring economic prosperity that serves all of a country's people. We will continue to support the brave members of civil society and human rights defenders. We will continue to call for an end to the systematic repression and harassment of media professionals who are just doing their jobs. We will continue to press for greater freedom of



Ambassador Peter Haas visits the Central Shaheed Minar on International Mother Language Day. -Photo courtesy: U.S. Embassy Dhaka

speech and assembly. And we will continue to call for meaningful political dialogue to pave the way for a more open, peaceful, and democratic society.

At the same time, we will look for areas where Bangladesh and the

United States have shared interests. On these issues, the United States is willing to move as quickly as Bangladesh is. I have already begun a series of meetings with cabinet members of the new government, looking for opportunities where we can



Ambassador Peter Haas visits the Banani Durga Puja Mandop during Durga Puja celebrations. -Photo courtesy: U.S. Embassy Dhaka

collaborate on areas of mutual importance.

Social and environmental resilience, for example, is critically important. My team and I intend to continue engagement with Bangladesh on climate change and the transition to clean energy. Climate change affects everyone, Americans and Bangladeshis alike. And I hope to build on our excellent cooperation that brought more than one hundred million of Covid vaccines to the people of Bangladesh.

The security relationship between our countries and in the region is also an important one. Our militaries (or armed forces) and law enforcement officials are finding more ways to expand their ability to work together to counter security threats and alleviate the impact of natural disasters. We also hope to play a role in the modernization of Bangladesh's military.

On the labor front, the United States believes that Bangladesh must align its laws, policies, and practices with international labor standards. President Biden has set out a Global Labor Strategy that prioritizes labor rights around the world. This Strategy will guide our actions in encouraging Bangladesh to adopt laws and policies that ensure workers can form and join independent, democratic unions freely and without fear, reprisal or retribution.

The United States remains committed to supporting



Ambassador Peter Haas inaugurates the new EMK Center. -Photo courtesy: U.S. Embassy Dhaka

Bangladesh's progress on labor rights, including through targeted development assistance. The United States is by far the largest foreign investor in

Bangladesh, as well as the largest single market for Bangladesh's exports of goods and services. We can – and should – make our economic

relationship function for everyone's benefit.

Finally, we will continue to work closely with the government to sustainably provide humanitarian assistance to nearly one million Rohingya survivors of genocide, and to seek a safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return home for all, once conditions in Myanmar allow.

The future comes one day at a time, and each day brings opportunity. Know that the United States stands with the people of Bangladesh as you reach towards that future – and we will always support you on your journey.

H.E. Peter D. Haas
Ambassador

United States of America to Bangladesh



কষ্টের সঞ্চয়ে কামিয়াব হোক আজন্মসঞ্চিত হজের নিয়ত

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BEYOND HORIZONS: THE U.S. INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY FOR A RESILIENT TOMORROW

-Mr. Fahd Bin Zahed

The geopolitical epicenter of the 21st century, the Indo-Pacific region becomes a center of gravity in weaving future global destinies. At a crucial summit, President Joe Biden emphasized the critical role of a region that is not only free and open but also resilient to waves of coercion and instability. This vision is eloquent about a deep commitment to creating a world where the winds of freedom blows unhindered across wide oceans and varying continents. The approach foresees a web of partnerships and alliances, composed of the threads of common interests and mutual regard, that seek to create an environment where every nation would flourish free from the specter of hegemony by a single



across all of Australia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand, which set a security foundation that empowered local democracies. Today, this sphere hosting more than half the world's population and controlling two-thirds of the global economic activities still directs American foreign involvements that are an echo of association and prolonged commitments to a balanced power system amid evolving threats.

power. It sets a call to protect the international law and human rights structure and the Indo-Pacific as an example of secure cooperation and prosperity.

Historical Context and Strategic Importance

In the historical narration of the last two hundred years, the

Indo-Pacific constitutes a pivot in the American strategic weave, melding huge economic and military stakes. Significantly lured by the commercial interests, the participation of the United States grew during the Asian immigration but settled during the intense World War II. This time resulted in an ironclad alliance system that spanned

The Region based upon Numbers

More than half the world's population are living in this region which includes 58% of the youth. This region alone accounts for 60% of global GDP with 2/3 of global economic growth. In terms of geographical context this region holds 65% of the world's oceans and 25% of its land.





Current Strategic Vision under President Biden

In a dynamic geopolitical environment, the administration of President Biden undertakes an Indo-Pacific vision that is marked with freedom, openness, and resilience. The strategy aims at addressing the strategic challenges posed by the assertive moves of the People's Republic of China across the economic, diplomatic, and military spheres—underlining the importance of a strong U.S. presence. This involvement does not only counteract these influences but also cements a regional order where international norms and rights, including navigation freedoms, are preserved; thus,

preserving a balance that sustains global stability and prosperity as well as U.S. allies and partners.

Key Objectives and Initiatives

The critical aims that should take center stage of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy should revolve around developing a regime that is based on freedom, connectivity, prosperity, security, and resilience. The approach seeks to maintain sovereignty, human rights and free navigation, as it creates a network of trust and reciprocity throughout large domains of sea and land. This program is critical in creating settings where regional countries can grow

independently without being unduly triggered or coerced. Strengthening the network of alliances (including inside and outside the regional borders) is crucial. This includes nourishing relations with traditional partners and key regional organizations like ASEAN, promoting a cooperative approach to regional issues. Enhanced relationships are being created not just to bolster diplomatic and military alliances but also to develop economic relations, which are more and more dictated by digital economy and infrastructure innovations. Economic initiatives concentrate on promoting regional prosperity with the help of enabling trade, investments and systems of sustainable growth, going through the digital transformation and constructing strong economic corridors, which deliver mutual advantages. On security, the strategy promises to update defense capabilities and reinforce military cooperation to prevent aggressions and to keep peace and order. Such an integrated approach is supported by the measures to address non-military challenges (climate change, health crises and other transnational threats) and promotes a comprehensive approach to regional resilience and security.

Implementation and Action Plan

The Indo-Pacific Action Plan details a forward-looking approach aimed at buttressing regional stability and prosperity for the next 12 to 24 months, focusing on critical diplomatic, economic, and military investments. These undertakings are designed to reinforce the U.S.





as a central player in the Indo-Pacific developing a free, open, and prosperous region. Diplomatically, the plan focuses on the reinforcement of alliances and the creation of new consulates, acting mainly in Southeast Asia, with respect to the issues of politics, economy, and security. Some of the economic measures are the implementation of the Indo-Pacific economic framework that concentrates on trade proliferation, supply chains safety, and sustainable economic policies necessary for regional prosperity. From military aspect, the plan emphasizes the development of defense strategies realized by integrated deterrence among all domains so that the U.S. and its allies can defend effectively. This contains

strengthening military presence and capacities, improving cooperative security approaches, and developing technological tie-ups. It is aimed to achieve synergy on the diplomatic, economic, and military planes, thereby, striking a balance in addressing both traditional and non-traditional securities issues and upholds the Indo-Pacific region where international laws are observed, and every nation prospers in a safe and free environment.

Challenges and Opportunities

In the whirl of complicated geopolitical tides, the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy meets stark challenges alongside several significant opportunities as well. Internally, coordinating varied national interest within U.S and

sustaining bipartisan support is a huge challenge. Externally, the strategic competition with China, guaranteeing the freedom of navigation and North Korean threat, are eternal challenges. Nevertheless, such dynamic environment also provides unique opportunities. Enhancing partnerships with major regional players such as Japan, Australia, and India, provides a route to reinforce regional security and economic development. In addition, strengthening the central role of ASEAN as a base permits cooperative regional stability, supporting an Indo-Pacific architecture that is both free and open.

The US Indo-Pacific Strategy comes out as the cornerstone of global stability and prosperity, stressing on unwavering dedication in nurturing a free, open and prosperous region. This strategic vision entails enabling teamwork with allies and partners to build a future that represents security, wealth, and resilience. Participating in such partnerships, the strategy targets not only immediate regional problems, but also long-term global peace. It is an important effort in transforming the geopolitical map, making sure that the Indo-Pacific area remains the stronghold of democratic values and economic welfare for a long period of time.

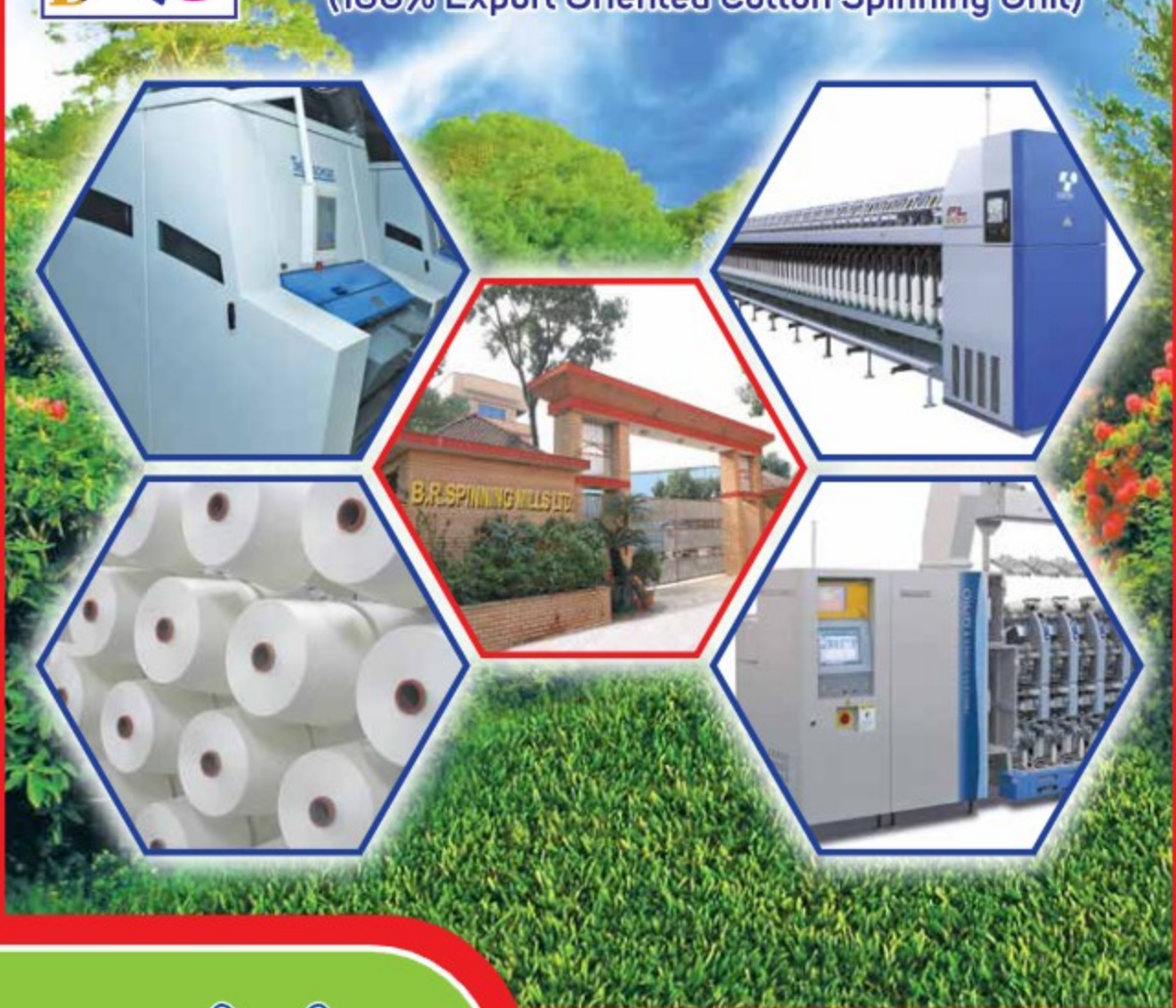
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FOSTERING INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY: REFLECTIONS FROM DHAKA

-Siti Nugraha Mauludiah

The bustling heart of Dhaka, Bangladesh, not only offers a vibrant tapestry of culture and daily life but also serves as a pivotal ground for discussions that shape the future of democracy in our region.

On March 18, 2024, at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS), we had the privilege of co-hosting the Dialogue on Democracy in Inclusive Society (DDIS) Forum.

This gathering, a testament to the spirit of collaboration between Indonesia and Bangladesh, focused on a key question: "Does Democracy Deliver?"

Bangladesh and Indonesia stand as two major emerging powers in Asia, each being an epicenter of growth in their respective regions—Southeast Asia and South Asia. Sharing common values and strategic significance in the region with Indonesia,

Bangladesh emerges as an ideal partner for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (MoFA RI) to host DDIS for the first time.

Initiated by MoFA RI, DDIS is created from a genuine desire to open a space for meaningful dialogue, idea exchange, and collaborative action. This initiative marked MoFA RI's pioneering effort to project the BDF's core values into focused bilateral forums like DDIS and



Indonesia's Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Heru Hartanto Subolo addresses the audience at the 'Fostering Inclusive Democracy: Reflections from Dhaka' event

aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges that our democracy is facing today. It acted as a continuation of the conversations we have nurtured through the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), creating a platform where the values of pluralism, inclusivity, and homegrown democracy, which we champion at the BDF, could be discussed, understood, and promoted in partnership with our friends in Bangladesh and beyond.

The forum was inaugurated with remarks that underscored the importance of DDIS as a platform for enhancing people-to-people contact and deepening our collective understanding of democratic values and practices. Here, I shared our vision for cross-sector collaboration in nurturing pluralism and tackling the societal challenges increased by digital disintegration and the spread of misinformation. We pointed out the urgency for all sectors to embrace a foundation of shared thought, where

inclusivity and democracy merge.

Following that, Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Director of the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) noted Bangladesh's unique path emphasizing the value of homegrown democracy that respects historical context and local knowledge. He appreciated BDF's role in

fostering inclusivity and highlighted how DDIS facilitates collaboration between our countries to champion these principles.

In the company of representatives from government entities, think tanks, academics, civil society organizations (CSOs), diplomatic corps, and media, we explored the core of democracy as it relates to inclusivity. The dialogue went beyond mere academic discourse, turning into an active sharing of ideas and experiences. It became clear that democracy, in its truest form, is not just a political system but a commitment to hearing every voice, especially those at the margins of our societies.

The forum was marked by insightful contributions from our diverse array of Indonesian speakers. Dr. Philips J. Vermonte, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the



Engaged audience members stand poised, delivering impassioned speeches at the event



Amidst an atmosphere of enthusiasm, speakers stand before the audience, sharing their thoughts and experiences with conviction

Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Dr. Mohammad Hasan Ansori, Executive Director of the Habibie Center, and Uni Zulfiani Lubis, Editor-in-Chief of IDN Times shared perspectives that bridged Indonesian experiences with global narratives on democracy's challenges and promises.

Through DDIS, we deepened our understanding of pluralistic democracy and the digital era's influence on democratic processes. These discussions stressed the essential partnership between government and non-state actors and addressed the challenges posed by the digital era to democratic integrity. Our discussions not only focused on identifying issues but also applauded the chance for unity and new thinking in fostering democratic engagement.

One of the forum's highlights was the input from Dr. Sadeka Halim, Vice Chancellor of Jagannath

University, Bangladesh. Her insights reminded us of the importance of restoring public trust in democracy by addressing power imbalances between government and non-government actors. Her stance served as a strong reminder to ensure that the voices of all citizens are heard and respected, enhancing our shared commitment to a democracy that truly delivers for its people.

The emphasis of this forum was placed on the need for continuous dialogue, mutual understanding, and active engagement from all of us. We collectively realized that modifying our approaches to democracy, especially in this rapidly evolving digital age, is key to fulfilling the needs of our societies.

Our discussions in Dhaka heavily focused on the complex relationship between digital media and democracy. We looked into how digital platforms can empower us but also pose challenges, stressing the importance of ethical governance, regulation, and digital literacy. It was also highlighted that the importance of ethical guidelines for digital media to ensure information is accurate and trustworthy, vital for a democracy where citizens are informed and actively involved.

As we departed from Dhaka, we held onto various insights, renewed connections, and a strengthened commitment to



In a dynamic exchange of ideas, attendees take the stage, delivering powerful speeches that resonate with the audience



Guest speakers captivate the crowd, standing tall as they share their insights and perspectives

the principles of democracy and inclusivity. This forum was not just a conclusion; it was a light guiding our collective efforts toward realizing democracy's full promise for everyone.

Looking forward, we are inspired by the spirit of dialogue and collaboration from Dhaka to embrace both the challenges and opportunities ahead. Let this journey remind us of our

shared dedication to fostering a world where democracy prospers, deeply embedded in the aspirations of our interconnected global community. This forum can continue by taking up issues in the areas of democracy and good governance as they evolve and relate to the interests of both our countries.

In reflection, the DDIS stands as a pivotal chapter in our ongoing dialogue on democracy and inclusivity—a dialogue that we must continue with renewed enthusiasm and joint hope. As we move forward, let us all commit to nurturing a world where the essence of democracy is celebrated in every action we take, together building a more inclusive and peaceful world.

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Deputy Minister for Information and Public Diplomacy
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BONDING BEYOND BORDERS: KING OF BHUTAN MAKES LANDMARK VISIT TO BANGLADESH

-AKM Sayedad Hossain

His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan visited Bangladesh from 25 to 28 March 2024, at the invitation of the Hon'ble President of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Shahabuddin. His Majesty The King was accompanied by Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, Queen of Bhutan, His Royal Highness Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck, His Royal Highness Gyalsey Jigme Ugyen Wangchuck, and Her Royal Highness Gyalsem Sonam Yangden Wangchuck. Ministers and senior officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan were also part of the Royal Entourage. The visit of His Majesty The King to Bangladesh is a testament of the close ties of friendship

and goodwill that so happily exist between the two countries.

His Majesty The King was received by the Hon'ble President of Bangladesh, on

arrival at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. King Jigme was presented with a Guard of Honour and greeted by members of the Cabinet and senior officials of the Bangladesh Government.



The King of Bhutan His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, is received by Hon'ble President of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Shahabuddin

His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on 25th March 2024 to pay tribute to the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh H. E. Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP called on His Majesty The King on 25th March 2024.

His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen attended the celebration of

Independence and National Day of Bangladesh on 26th March 2024 as the Special Guest. Their Majesties paid a tribute to the memory of the sacrifices of the heroic freedom fighters of Bangladesh at the National Martyrs' Memorial at Savar, which included the laying of a wreath, signing the visitors' book, and planting of a sapling.

His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen will meet with the Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at Bangabhaban.



Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck engages in high-level talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh, fostering bilateral relations and cooperation

Hon. President of Bangladesh hosted a banquet on 26 th March 2024 in honour of His Majesty The King.

His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen met with H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on 25th March 2024.

The following Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed during the visit: a. MoU between Bangladesh and Bhutan for Cooperation on the establishment of a Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit

in Thimphu and Health Cooperation. b. MoU between Bangladesh and Bhutan for Cooperation on establishing Bhutanese Special Economic Zone in Kurigram, Bangladesh by Bhutan c. MoU between the Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection of Bangladesh and the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority of Bhutan.

The following Agreement was renewed: Agreement between Bangladesh and Bhutan on Cultural cooperation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction that the annual intake of Bhutanese students for admission to MBBS in public medical colleges of Bangladesh has been increasing gradually. To further consolidate the existing momentum of cooperation, Bangladesh offered to increase the number of annual MBBS seats for Bhutanese students from 22 (twenty-two) to 30 (thirty).

Both sides emphasized on strengthening the cooperation on capacity building between the Government officials of the

two countries. As part of that, Bangladesh: a) Offered 2 seats to the Bhutanese Foreign Service Officers every year at the Foreign Service Academy of Bangladesh – the Diplomatic Training Institute for capacity building. b) The Foreign Service Academy would also like to extend necessary assistance to Bhutan in setting up a Diplomatic Training Institute in Bhutan for their diplomats. c) Offered special training to 3 batches of 7-10 Bhutanese Officials each year in Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC). d) Gifted electronic devices (tabs and laptops) Made in Bangladesh with a view to contributing to the capacity building and skill development for the government officials of Bhutan as a special gesture of goodwill and friendship.

During the official meeting, the two sides expressed happiness on the current state of relations between Bangladesh and Bhutan, which is a very special one based on common history, geographical proximity, and the shared aspiration of the people for prosperity and development.

King Jigme expressed his deep appreciation for the cordial welcome and warm hospitality extended to Him and the members of His delegation during their stay in Bangladesh.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh recalled with gratitude the invaluable support of His Majesty King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the Third King of Bhutan and the people of Bhutan during Bangladesh's War of Independence. Hon'ble Prime Minister fondly recalled Bhutan



His Majesty the King of Bhutan paid tribute to the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum (Dhanmondi 32, Dhaka)

being the first country to recognise Bangladesh as an independent country on 6th December 1971. Both Bangladesh and Bhutan recognized with deep satisfaction the manner in which the historic ties between Bangladesh and Bhutan have evolved over the years into a mutually beneficial relationship. They stated that the kinship, which is based on goodwill, friendship, and understanding, is an example of good neighborliness, mutual respect, and cooperation.

Both sides expressed happiness that Bangladesh and Bhutan signed the Agreement on the Movement of Traffic-in-Transit and its Protocol in March 2023 which will usher in new horizons for bilateral trade and connectivity. The Agreement and its Protocol will not only be phenomenal for bilateral trade but also will work as a platform for paving the way for an interconnected South Asia.

Both sides noted that regional and sub-regional connectivity are

important means of economic integration and enhancing trade and commerce. They noted with satisfaction that the collaborative efforts between the two sides in connectivity through roads, rail, and waterways will strengthen bilateral ties as well as foster regional integration and economic growth in South Asia.

Both sides expressed satisfaction at the increasing trend in trade between Bangladesh and Bhutan in recent years. They expressed satisfaction on the recent

initiatives between the two countries for facilitating trade such as Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) – the first of its kind for the two countries, and the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for seamless use of the inland waterways of Bangladesh.

Bhutan conveyed its appreciation to Bangladesh for offering the 'Special Economic Zone' in 'Kurigram' in the northern part of Bangladesh, which is 190 kms from the southern city of Gelephu, Bhutan. It is a matter of happiness that an MOU has been signed in this regard by the authorities of Bangladesh and Bhutan. During the visit, His Majesty The King will visit the Special Economic Zone in Kurigram. The economic zone will add a new horizon in the area of bilateral trade and investment between the two countries and also achieve greater prosperity in the South Asia region.

The power and energy sector provides an important area for cooperation between Bangladesh and Bhutan. In this regard, both sides underscored the importance of strengthening



Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud holds a meeting with His Majesty the King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck at a city hotel on Monday, March 25, 2024



Bangladesh and Bhutan have signed three new memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina witnessed the MoU signing held at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

subregional cooperation in the energy sector among Bhutan, Bangladesh and India.

Both sides acknowledged that regional cooperation is very important for shared peace and prosperity in the region. They noted that the two countries should work together in the regional organizations like SAARC and BIMSTEC to ensure greater regional cooperation.

Both sides expressed satisfaction at the growing trend of cooperation between the two countries in the area of health and education. His Majesty The King will visit Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn & Plastic Surgery in Dhaka on 26th March 2024 and interact with the officials, doctors and students there. Bangladesh is going to establish a burn and plastic

surgery unit in Thimphu which will be another milestone in the bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and Bhutan in the health sector.

Both sides expressed satisfaction that there has been exemplary people-to-people contact between Bangladesh and Bhutan for decades. They reiterated to further strengthen the people-to-people contact between Bangladesh and Bhutan by connecting the Himalayas in Bhutan with the longest sea beach in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

Both sides expressed happiness on Bhutan's recent graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) status. Bangladesh has also completed all the procedures for graduation from LDC and is expected to

graduate from LDC status in 2026. Both sides agreed that the two countries can work together in the post-graduation context to collaborate with each other for addressing the related challenges to ensure greater benefits for the peoples of the two countries.

During the visit, King Jigme will visit the Padma Bridge, a monumental infrastructural feat constructed entirely through the self-financing efforts of the Bangladesh government. This remarkable infrastructure project stands as a testament to Bangladesh's commitment to advancing connectivity and fostering economic growth. King Jigme will also visit a Special Economic Zone in Araihasar to witness firsthand the infrastructure and facilities there.

While in Dhaka, His Majesty The King will also meet and interact with the Bangladesh business leaders and potential investors to explore new avenues for economic and commercial ties between the two countries.

The State Visit of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen to Bangladesh has further strengthened the traditional ties of friendship, cooperation and goodwill between the two countries.

His Majesty The King of Bhutan extended invitations to the Hon'ble President and the Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh to visit Bhutan.

AKM Sayedad Hossain
Associate Editor
Diplomats World Publication



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WEAVING ELEGANCE: THE TIMELESS APPEAL OF JAMDANI SAREE

Originating from the heart of Bangladesh, the Dhakai Jamdani saree embodies centuries of tradition and artistry. The term "Jamdani" itself reflects the rich history of this fabric, derived from Persian words meaning "flower" and "vase," showcasing the intricate floral motifs that adorn these exquisite garments.

Historically, the art of weaving Jamdani sarees dates back to ancient times, with mentions found in writings dating as far back as the 3rd century BC. During the Mughal era, this craft reached its zenith, as emperors bestowed royal patronage upon it, recognizing its unparalleled beauty and craftsmanship. However, with the decline of the Mughal Empire and the onset of British rule, Jamdani weaving faced challenges, experiencing a decline.

Since Bangladesh's independence, there has been a resurgence of interest in preserving and promoting this traditional art form. The Dhakai Jamdani saree, named after the capital city of Dhaka, has become synonymous with elegance and sophistication. Weavers in Dhaka district, especially along the banks of the Shitalakkhya river, have meticulously crafted these sarees for generations, using traditional methods passed down through families.

The recognition of Dhakai Jamdani as a Geographical Indication (GI) product is a significant milestone in Bangladesh's efforts to protect and promote its indigenous textiles. This prestigious status acknowledges Dhakai Jamdani's unique qualities, stemming from its geographical origin and centuries-old heritage.

Today, Dhakai Jamdani sarees continue to enchant women not only in Bangladesh but also across the globe. With its diverse motifs, including the iconic "thousand emeralds" and "paisley," each saree tells a story of skillful craftsmanship and cultural heritage. The resurgence of interest in Jamdani sarees reflects a growing appreciation for traditional textiles, ensuring that this timeless art form remains vibrant and cherished for generations to come.





PATHWAY TO ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

-Mahbub Saber

Voice of The Victims:

1. After more than six years in refugee camps scattered all around the southern half of Cox's Bazaar district, Rohingyas are increasingly becoming vocal to their rights and emphasized fundamentals for their safe return to Rakhine State. Their key demands include citizenship recognition, freedom of movement, and property restitution. In an interview with Mr. Proshoon Rahmaan, producer of the 2019 Rohingya Documentary film 'Long Period of Persecution', Mr. Mohammad Abul Kalam, the former Refugee, RRRC had identified four key stumbling blocks, preventing any

sustainable repatriation initiatives of Rohingyas:

- a. They must be recognized as an ethnic population of Myanmar e.g., Rohingyas should be awarded full citizenship rights.
- b. After returning to Myanmar, the Rohingyas must be allowed to go back to their respective villages rather than (IDP) camps in Myanmar after leaving a camp-life in Bangladesh.
- c. The Rohingyas must enjoy basic civil rights in Myanmar including; freedom of movement, livelihood opportunities, access to education, healthcare facilities etc.

- d. They must be allowed to get back the properties that belong to them before their displacement.

The residing in Bangladesh, who volunteered to speak for their communities came up with more precious demands, such as;

- a. Perpetrators (committed atrocities against them, notably Myanmar military and their associates) must be taken to international trial.
- b. Rohingyas must have legitimate rights like every other community of Myanmar.
- c. Full 'Citizenship Rights' for the Rohingyas (in Myanmar)



The Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina delivering her speech at the 72nd (Left) and 73rd (Right) UNGA Sessions, at UN headquarters in New York, United States

prior any repatriation initiatives to be materialized.

Bangladeshi Standpoint:

2. The Bangladeshi government emphasizes that, any solution to the repatriation lies with Myanmar, as stated by the Hounarable Prime Minister (HPM) of Bangladesh: "...the Rohingya crisis has its origin in Myanmar, so its solution has to be found in Myanmar."

However, some misrepresent the issue as a 'Crisis between Bangladesh and Myanmar', which Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque, former secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh refutes, stating, "The Rohingya crisis is fundamentally a historic conflict between

Myanmar government and one of its own population." Unlike past repatriation successes, today's geopolitics involve more active global communities and influential media, complicating the Rohingya crisis.

Framework for Solution:

3. The UNGA Speeches of Bangladeshi HPM: At the 72nd United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Session, the HPM Sheikh Hasina proposed a 'Five Point Solution' to the Rohingya crisis. This solution, deemed thoughtful, pragmatic, and realistic, addresses key factors associated with the crisis:

a. Myanmar must unconditionally stop the

- violence and the practice of ethnic cleansing in the Rakhine State immediately and forever.
- b. UN Secretary General should immediately send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar.
- c. All civilians irrespective of religion and ethnicity must be protected in Myanmar. For that 'safe zones' could be created inside Myanmar under UN supervision.
- d. Ensuring sustainable return of all the forcibly-displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar.
- e. The recommendations of the Kofi Annan Commission Report must be immediately implemented unconditionally and in its entirety.

The HPM followed up with her five-point solution with a four-point objective approach to the crisis in her speech to the following year's General Assembly session; 73rd UNGA:

- a. Myanmar must manifest clear political will supported by concrete actions for sustainable return and reintegration of the Rohingya to Myanmar.
- b. Myanmar must build trust among the Rohingya by discarding discriminatory laws and practices and allowing 'go and see' visit to the Northern Rakhine by the Rohingya representatives.
- c. Myanmar must guarantee security and safety of the Rohingya by deploying civilian monitors from international community in the Rakhine state.
- d. International communities must ensure that the root causes of Rohingya problem area addressed and the violation of human rights and other atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingya are accounted for.



Former UN secretary general Kofi Annan (C) talks during a press conference about his commission's final report in Yangon on August 24, 2017. Photo: Jacob Goldberg



Rohingya Refugee

Framework for Solution-An Analysis:

4. The HPM of Bangladesh proposed a 'Five-point Solution' at the 72nd UN General Assembly and a 'Four-point Objective Approach', which explores crucial events for solving the Rohingya crisis. This merits further analysis to understand its outreach and ramifications:

- a. Stopping violence and ethnic cleansing i.e., halting military operations and abandoning draconian counter-insurgency strategies like the 'four-cut' tactic.
- b. Call for a UN Fact-finding mission led to its initiation by the UN Secretary General a year later, indicating momentum from her address.
- c. Creating a 'Safe Zone' in Rakhine State by drawing on historical administrative structures like the Mayu Frontier Administration.
- d. Emphasizing the need for 'sustainable return', highlights past failed repatriation efforts due to the failure to address root causes of the crisis.
- e. The Kofi Annan Commission Report, released just before the

current exodus, offers comprehensive recommendations for resolving the crisis.

- f. In her 73rd UNGA address, the HPM urged Myanmar to show 'Political Will' & 'Concrete Action', citing the ongoing plight of Rohingya IDPs in Rakhine State.
- g. Building trust is crucial for repatriation; Myanmar has failed to materialize the HPM's proposal for 'go and see' visits by Rohingya representatives.
- h. Given the history of military operations and local government maltreatment of Rohingyas in Myanmar, the HPM proposes international civilian monitors to oversee their situation.
- i. Addressing the core cause of the problem, particularly the lack of Rohingya rights in the Burmese constitution, is critical for assuring returnees' safety and bringing offenders accountable for their crimes.

5. Kofi Annan Commission Report:

The 'Advisory Commission on Rakhine State', chaired by

former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, submitted its final report to Burmese authorities on August 23, 2017. Established by Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi on September 5, 2016, the Commission addressed challenges in Rakhine State, emphasizing Rohingya issues Among 88 recommendations, the last four emphasized implementation.

- a. The Commission urges the Government to involve local communities in decision-making and ensure their benefit from natural resource extraction, advocating for adequate compensation and infrastructure investment.
- b. The Commission recommends expediting citizenship verification, reviewing the 1982 Citizenship Law to meet international standards, reassessing ethnicity-citizenship linkage, and enabling naturalization for stateless individuals.
- c. Ensuring freedom of movement regardless of religion, ethnicity, or citizenship status, the Commission suggests lifting existing restrictions and measures to prohibit informal barriers.
- d. Urgent steps are needed for communal representation, particularly for underrepresented groups like ethnic minorities, stateless, and displaced communities.
- f. Protection of historic, religious, and cultural sites in Rakhine State.
- g. Inter-communal dialogue at various levels is encouraged to foster cohesion.
- h. To enhance security, the Commission proposes simplifying Rakhine's security infrastructure and creating a



Rohingya refugees gather in an open field at Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhia, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh to commemorate the two-year anniversary of the Myanmar military's ethnic cleansing campaign in Rakhine State on August 25, 2019. Photo: K M Asad

unified policing agency.

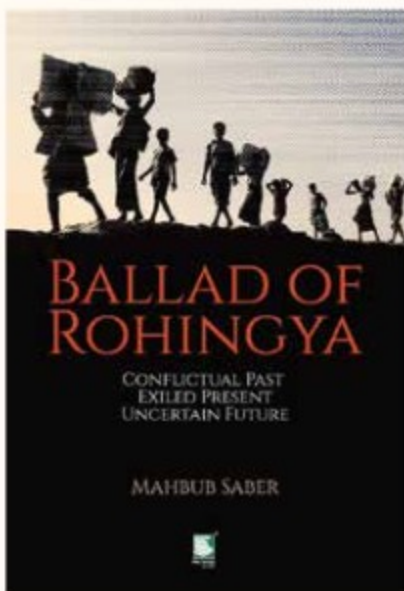
- i. Strengthen bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh to address shared challenges like drug trafficking and secure the border.
- j. Appointing a ministerial-level coordinator to oversee policy on

Rakhine State and ensure the effective implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

Conclusion

6. The core of any Rohingya repatriation initiative hinges on granting them full citizenship

rights, a contentious issue deeply rooted in conflicting narratives between the Rohingya and Rakhine communities. Mistrust, compounded by radical elements on both sides, hinders consensus. Elderly Rohingyas recount past forced migrations and severe state restrictions in Rakhine. Previous repatriation attempts failed due to the unresolved citizenship rights issue, leaving Rohingya stability and permanency unachieved on their own land. With the advent of Arakan Army's military offensive to the Rakhine State, that effectively granted the territorial control over 60% of Rakhine State, a new dynamic has been added to the repatriation equation. But to the contrary to many who believes otherwise, the proposal put forwarded by the HPM Sheikh Hasina, still remains to be the only logical pathway to solution of the crisis, for the Rohingyas to go back to their motherland.



Mahbub Saber

Expert on Rohingya and Myanmar Affairs

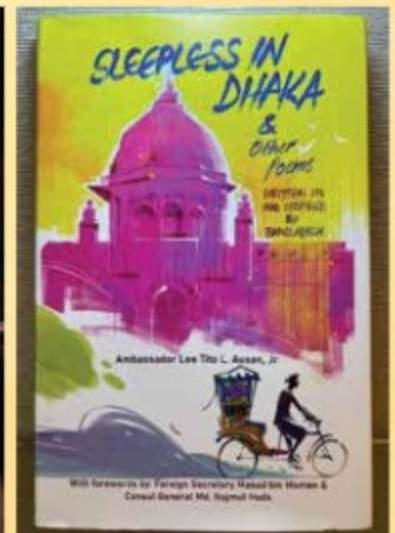
The article is an extract from the authors book Ballad of Rohingya

AMBASSADOR AUSAN'S POETRY COLLECTION "SLEEPLESS IN DHAKA" DEBUTS

In a literary affair at a Baridhara Diplomatic Zone hotel, Ambassador H.E. Leo Tito L. Ausan, Jr. unveiled "Sleepless in Dhaka and Other Poems" on April 22. This anthology of sixteen poems and two verses mirrors Ambassador Ausan's profound immersion in Bangladeshi heritage and society.

Textiles and Jute Minister H.E. Jahangir Kabir Nanak MP, extolled Ambassador Ausan's role as a 'Poet-Diplomat,' lauding his poetic musings on figures like Bangabandhu and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as well as his evocative portrayal of Bangladeshi life, including its emblematic rickshaws and jute creations. The esteemed recitation artist Shimul Mustafa paid homage to the ambassador through verse.

Ambassador Ausan's benevolence shone as he presented 100 copies of his work to the Foreign Service Academy, embraced by dignitaries such as Ambassador Mashfee Binte Shams and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen. The event drew a distinguished audience of foreign diplomats from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Nepal, Sweden, Brunei, and Indonesia, alongside luminaries from academia, governance, and commerce.





THE RESPLENDENT DAWN: POHELA BOISHAKH'S CULTURAL SYMPHONY UNVEILED

-Syed Atique

Pohela Boishakh, the radiant harbinger of Bengali New Year, dances into the hearts of the people with an effervescent spirit, painting the cultural canvas of the land with vibrant hues of tradition and festivity. Known affectionately as 'Noboborsho' or 'Borsho Boron Utshab', this joyous occasion heralds the advent of the first day of Boishakh, the inaugural month in the Bengali Solar Calendar. On the auspicious date of April 14th, a national holiday ensconces Bangladesh in jubilation, as its people come together in exuberant celebration. Across West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, and beyond, the Bengali diaspora joins in the



Shubhajatra of Pohela Boishakh

revelry, bridging religious and regional divides with shared jubilation.

Yet, amidst the revelry, whispers of antiquity weave through the fabric of the celebration, their origins shrouded in the mists of time. Legends whisper of a bygone era under the reign of the illustrious Mughal Emperor, Akbar. In those days of yore, when agriculture reigned supreme as the lifeblood of the nation, the fiscal landscape was fraught with challenges. Taxes, levied in accordance with the lunar-based Hijri calendar, clashed with the solar rhythms of agrarian life, threatening chaos for the peasantry. Sensing the discord, Emperor Akbar, in a stroke of sagacity, ushered forth a new era of order. With a decree as bold as the stroke of his pen, he birthed a novel calendar, aligning taxation with the bountiful cycles of the sun-kissed fields. Thus, in the annals of

history, Emperor Akbar's visionary act not only birthed a new calendar but also inaugurated a tradition that would endure through the ages.

Yet, the annals of time hold myriad tales, each a thread in the rich tapestry of Pohela

Boishakh's genesis. Whispers of lore beckon from shadowed corners, inviting the curious to delve deeper into the enigmatic origins of this cherished celebration. For every historian, a tale; for every storyteller, a narrative spun from the loom of tradition. And thus, the legacy of Pohela Boishakh endures, a testament to the resilience of culture and the timeless spirit of renewal.

In the ethereal dawn of Pohela Boishakh, Bangladesh awakens to a symphony of cultural fervor beneath the sprawling canopy of the Ramna Batamul, where the venerable banyan tree stands as a silent witness to the nation's collective spirit. Here, amidst the verdant embrace of Ramna Park, thousands converge in eager anticipation for the annual extravaganza curated by 'Chhayanaut', a bastion of Bengali heritage.

As the first rays of sunlight cast their golden glow upon the gathered throngs, the air resonates with the melodious



Dancers welcome Bangla New Year with a traditional dance performance



Traditional delicacies of Pohela Boishakh

strains of Rabindranath Tagore's timeless anthem, "Esho hei Boishakh, esho, esho," beckoning souls to join in the chorus of celebration. It is a moment of profound significance, as the echoes of Tagore's words reverberate through the hearts of all who bear witness.

Following this stirring prelude, the stage becomes a tableau of cultural splendor, as performers from across the nation showcase the rich tapestry of Bengali arts. From traditional music and dance to poetry recitations and theatrical performances, each act serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of Bengali culture.

But perhaps the most iconic aspect of the festivities is the Mangal Shobhajatra, a vibrant procession that winds its way through the streets, led by the visionary students of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. With each step, they breathe life into the ancient

tradition, their colorful costumes and elaborate floats capturing the imagination of all who behold them.

Indeed, Pohela Boishakh transcends the boundaries of caste, creed, and community, drawing participants from all walks of life to partake in its luminous embrace. It is a celebration of unity in diversity, a testament to the power of culture to unite and uplift the human spirit.

In recognition of its unique and artistic significance, Pohela Boishakh was bestowed with the prestigious title of "Cultural Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO in 2016, cementing its place as a beacon of cultural pride for the nation and beyond. And as the echoes of celebration fade into the night, the spirit of Pohela Boishakh lingers on, a timeless reminder of the resilience and vibrancy of Bengali culture.

To partake in the jubilant festivities of Pohela Boishakh is to immerse oneself in a kaleidoscope of tradition and joy, where every corner of the land resonates with the spirit of renewal and camaraderie. As the sun rises on this auspicious day, the vibrant procession of Mangal Shobhajatra beckons, a riot of color and culture that sets the stage for a day of celebration.

Amidst the jovial throngs, greetings of "Shuvo Noboborsho" ripple through the air, uniting hearts in the promise of a new beginning. Homes come alive with the ancient art of Alpana, intricate designs adorning every



Student of Charukala Institute, Dhaka University preparing masks for Pohela Boishakh



Celebration of Pohela Boishakh in Dhaka

surface as a tribute to tradition and auspiciousness. As families gather in the warmth of the shared company, the air is filled with the aroma of festive delicacies, each dish a testament to the rich culinary heritage of Bengal.

But beyond the rituals of home and hearth, Pohela Boishakh heralds a new chapter in the business world as well. With the dawn of the Bengali fiscal year, business owners ceremoniously open new ledgers, symbolizing a fresh start and welcoming clients with sweet offerings, paving the way for prosperous transactions in the year ahead.

Yet, the heartbeat of this centuries-old celebration echoes

loudest in the bustling fairs that dot the landscape, known as Boishakhi Melas. Here, amidst the myriad stalls laden with traditional wares and delicacies, the pulse of the nation beats in harmony with the rhythm of tradition. From handicrafts to agricultural goods, from pottery to wooden furniture, the Mela is a treasure trove of cultural riches, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the tapestry of Bengali heritage.

But the festivities do not end there. Across the country, a myriad of traditional events and rural sports unfold, each a testament to the enduring spirit of community and joy. From boat races to kite flying, from puppet shows to cockfights, the

celebrations embrace every facet of Bengali life, weaving a tapestry of tradition that binds the past with the present.

In the digital age, the spirit of Pohela Boishakh finds new expression through social media, television specials, and cultural events, ensuring that its legacy endures in the hearts and minds of generations to come. And as the day draws to a close, the echoes of celebration linger, a testament to the enduring spirit of Pohela Boishakh and the timeless beauty of Bengali culture.

In essence, this exploration endeavors to reveal the essence of Pohela Boishakh and its profound connection to our rural Bengali ethos and customs. Despite the shifting tides of time, Pohela Boishakh remains a steadfast beacon of our cultural legacy, a testament to the enduring spirit of our heritage. Indeed, it stands as a testament to the resilience of tradition and the unyielding bonds of community. As we embrace its festivities with open hearts, Pohela Boishakh not only ignites our souls with newfound joy and fervor but also unites us all under its timeless embrace, transcending barriers of caste, creed, and community.

Syed Atique
Media Analyst

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NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF CLIMATE DIPLOMACY: BANGLADESH'S IMPERATIVE

-Shahed Akhtar

The Earth does not belong to us. We belong to the Earth. – Bangladesh Environmentalist deserves recognition

In the face of escalating climate change impacts, Bangladesh stands at the forefront of climate diplomacy, navigating a complex terrain shaped by its unique vulnerabilities and proactive engagement in international negotiations. As one of the most disaster-prone nations globally, Bangladesh grapples with the compounded effects of its hydrogeological features, geographical positioning, and low-lying deltaic landscapes. With projections estimating Bangladesh's population to soar between 230-250 million by 2050, the imperative for proactive

measures to mitigate climate risks becomes increasingly urgent.

This article delves into Bangladesh's journey in climate diplomacy, highlighting key achievements, challenges, and priorities for international collaboration. Bangladesh's Climate Diplomacy Landscape: Bangladesh's engagement in climate diplomacy traces back to its inception at the 1995 Berlin Summit, where the nation emerged as an active participant in the Conference of the Parties (COP).

Over the years, Bangladesh has cultivated strong ties with esteemed environmental experts and luminaries, including Dr. Rezaul Karim, former Chief of the

Environment Unit at UN/ESCAP, Dr. K F Jalal, a senior executive of the Asian Development Bank, Dr. Atiq Rahman, a prominent environmental scientist at the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, and Dr Ainal Nishat former Vice Chancellor Brac University, reputed Water Resources and Environmental Expert is an active and well known in environmental circle. The recent passing of the revered climate scientist Dr. Saleemul Haq, who dedicated his life to safeguarding the planet from the scourge of climate change, underscores the gravity of Bangladesh's commitment to climate action.

Key Achievements in Climate Adaptation: Bangladesh's efforts in



Climate change's impact on monsoons: Submerged scenery becomes the new normal

climate adaptation and mitigation have been substantial, marked by notable achievements such as the preparation of the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. Adopted by the government in 2009 ahead of COP 15 in Copenhagen, this strategy garnered acclaim both nationally and internationally for its comprehensive approach to addressing climate-induced vulnerabilities.

Bangladesh's emphasis on technological innovations to combat climate challenges is exemplified by the appointment of learned Mr. Saber Hossain

Chowdhury MP earlier as a special envoy on environmental matters and, more recently, as the Cabinet Minister for Environment and Climate Change. These appointments underscore Bangladesh's dedication to tackling pressing climate change issues head-on. His track record has proved him to be a strong supporter of environmental and climate change activities.

Contributions to Global Climate Diplomacy: Bangladesh has played a pivotal role in shaping global climate agreements, advocating for initiatives such as



Amidst a parched landscape, a lone creature struggles to survive as the earth longs for the touch of rain, a stark reminder of the impact of climate change

the Copenhagen Accord and the establishment of the Green Climate Fund. At COP 15, Bangladesh supported and promoted the Copenhagen Accord, which marked the first time developed countries agreed to a goal of raising \$100 billion by 2020, although this target remains unfulfilled.

Additionally, Bangladesh's advocacy for limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius was instrumental in shaping the ambitions of the Accord. The nation's active participation in subsequent COPs, including COP 21 in Paris, further underscores its commitment to global climate action.

Challenges and Opportunities in Climate Negotiations: Global climate negotiations are characterized by their arduous nature, often spanning years to achieve consensus on key agreements. The process leading to the Paris Agreement at COP 21 exemplifies the challenges inherent in reaching a global consensus on climate action.

Bangladesh's participation in COPs highlights its commitment to addressing critical issues such as technology transfer, finance, and loss and damage. COP28 in Dubai presents an opportunity for intensified international collaboration on shared climate priorities, demanding stepped-up climate action to ensure the well-being of future generations.

Critical Priorities for COP28: Keeping 1.5 degrees within reach: Bangladesh remains committed to reducing emissions in line with its Nationally



The village of Kalabagi, located in the Dakop region of the Khulna district of Bangladesh, faces a crisis of freshwater. Due to rising sea levels, Kalabagi was inundated with salt water during high tide. Lacking fresh water, people living in this area are now using salt water for daily use, leading to various diseases. This photo was a Climatelinks 2022 photo contest winner.

Determined Contribution (NDC) and emphasizes the need for global consensus and action to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Action on adaptation: Progress on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and a framework for enhancing adaptive capacity, resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change are imperative. Action on technology, finance, and capacity are the cornerstones of UNFCCC implementation.

The Technology Mechanism, comprising the Technology Executive Committee (TEC) and Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTC&N), necessitates enhanced financing and administration to effectively address both mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts. Dr. Rezaul Karim, a Bangladeshi expert, played an active role in negotiations as part of the government delegation in several COPs.

At COP28, Bangladesh's delegation emphasized the significance of technology for Bangladesh and raised concerns over delays in creating special funds for climate-vulnerable countries.

The National progress on loss and damage: Operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund and Santiago Network for Loss and Damage is crucial for effective delivery to vulnerable countries.

Finance: Fulfilling commitments to mobilize climate finance for

developing economies, including reaching the \$100 billion climate finance goal annually, remains pivotal. Private finance will play a crucial role in achieving this goal. Despite these ambitious priorities, achieving them won't be easy, and trade-offs are inevitable in multilateral negotiations.

However, Bangladesh remains steadfast in aiming high and collaborating with like-minded partners to advance the climate agenda from rhetoric to action. Most importantly, the loss and damage fund should complement, not replace, the Adaptation Fund. Present adaptation needs far exceed the committed \$100 billion annually for adaptation and mitigation at COP28. Technology, finance, and capacity building are the cornerstones of UNFCCC implementation, necessitating enhanced financing and administration to effectively address both mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts.

As Bangladesh navigates the outcomes of COP28, there is an opportunity to capitalize on positive developments while addressing areas of concern. The operationalization of the Loss and



A woman is seen standing at a place affected by flood in Bangladesh

COP28 UAE

— Pre-COP —



Environment Minister Md Shahab Uddin (M), flanked by Saber Hossain Chowdhury (R), special envoy to the prime minister on the environment and climate change, and Dr Farhina Ahmed, secretary of the environment ministry, pose for a picture in Abu Dhabi, UAE on Monday, October 30, 2023

Damage Fund represents a significant step forward, albeit with challenges related to funding allocation. Bangladesh can leverage decisions on renewable energy and energy efficiency to accelerate progress towards its Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP) targets.

Moreover, Bangladesh's leadership in adaptation and disaster management positions as a global leader, deserving of recognition and support. Initiatives such as developing a national adaptation plan (NAP) and mainstreaming adaptation in development policies showcase Bangladesh's proactive approach to climate resilience.

Bangladesh mourns the loss of Prof. Saleemul Haq in October 2023, a leading Climate Specialist whose work in establishing the

concept of loss and damage as central to climate justice remains pivotal. Prof. Haq's contributions and revered presence in COP proceedings will be missed. We also mourn the very recent loss of Dr. K. F. Jalal, a great personality in promoting environmental action in Asia and the Pacific through his leadership positions at UN/ESCAP and the Asian Development Bank. Moving Forward: Despite challenges, Bangladesh remains steadfast in its climate ambitions, aiming to translate rhetoric into action through collaboration and determination. The operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund and advancements in renewable energy underscores Bangladesh's commitment to climate resilience. Moreover, Bangladesh's leadership in

adaptation and disaster management positions as a global leader deserving recognition and support.

Recently Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stated that Asia-Pacific region must put up a united front in tackling the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and trans boundary pollution and cooperate on cross-border water management and air quality improvement. Also prepare for growing extreme weather experienced in our region. Towards this Prime Minister invited UN-ESCAP to help build the capacity of climate-vulnerable countries to mobilize adequate international climate financing.

Bangladesh's climate diplomacy journey underscores the imperative for global solidarity and support in confronting the challenges of climate change. Through collective action and unwavering determination. Bangladesh strives to short a sustainable path forward for future generations amidst the complexities of climate diplomacy. As the world navigates the uncertainties of climate change, Bangladesh expects rush and developed nations to make funds available for Bangladesh for adaptation and loss and damage. We need to push for ambitious climate financing goals beyond 2025 at COP-29 in Azerbaijan.

Shahed Akhtar

Ambassador & Fmr. Secretary, GoB
and Editor, Diplomats World Publication

Diplomats Journey

Diplomats started its journey in 2018 as the first and only publication of diplomatic news in Bangladesh with the aim of highlighting the progress of democratization and economic developments in Bangladesh. The Founding Editor of Diplomats Magazine was Emeritus Professor and Fmr. Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen. He also served for seven years as the Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Nazinur Rahim, Founding Director of Brunei Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BBCCI), is the co-founder of **Diplomats**. Since its inception, Mr. Rahim has been working as the Publisher and Executive Editor. He is also involved in IT, Software development & digital transformation business in home and abroad. Currently Mr. Shahed Akhtar, Fmr. Ambassador & Secretary, GoB is the Editor of Diplomats and Mr. Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Fmr. State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GoB is the Executive Advisor of **Diplomats**.

The **Diplomats** is available in print as well as online subscriptions. Currently, it has between 25,000 and 30,000 regular subscribers via online through Email, WhatsApp and Facebook, and more than 3,500 regular subscribers of the printed version. **Diplomats** is the only publication of its kind in Bangladesh. The main objective of this publication is to promote Bangladesh among foreign diplomats, expatriates and foreign nationals at home and abroad. At the same time, **Diplomats** is working tirelessly to present Bangladesh's image to the world very positively.

From the arrays of activities of **Diplomats**, few of the followings are notable-

Diplomats presented **Set-Top Box** to all the Missions abroad with the aim of enabling the viewers to watch Bangla TV channels abroad. The initiative was taken to promote Bangladesh's art, culture and various development activities. The set-top boxes are expected to enable showcasing Bangladesh in every corner of the world.

The first **Genocide Corner** has been setup at the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy with the help of **Diplomats Publication** in order to present the glorious history of Bangladesh's War of liberation and at the same time, the horrific atrocities carried out by the occupation forces during the war in 1971.

So far, as many as Twenty-One seminars have been organized by **Diplomats** in many different countries, including Italy, France and United Kingdom. In these seminars Bangladesh's progress and achievements have been highlighted. Honorable Minister, Foreign Diplomats and senior officials from various international organizations participated in these seminars.

At present, **Diplomats Publication** is being sent to all the foreign missions of Bangladesh around the world. At the same time, all the Foreign Embassies, International organizations, Banks, media, Member of Parliament and key decision makers in Bangladesh are receiving copies of **Diplomats publication** on regular basis.

BANGLADESH AND THAILAND FORGE CLOSER TIES: PRIME MINISTERS SHEIKH HASINA AND SRETTA THAVISIN PLEDGE ENHANCED COOPERATION IN BILATERAL MEETING



Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held a bilateral meeting with Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin at the Government House on 26 April 2024. The whole gamut of bilateral relations was discussed in the meeting and the two Prime Ministers pledged to further strengthen cooperation in various sectors.

The Prime Minister was received at the Government House by her counterpart Prime Minister Thavisin in the morning. She was given a guard of honour at the Thai Prime Minister's office. The two leaders held a tete-a-tete that was followed by an hour-long talk between the two sides. Trade, investment, connectivity, cooperation in RMG export, pharmaceuticals, agro-processing, health care, people-to-people contact, Rohingya issue and ASEAN sectoral dialogue partnership featured prominently in the discussion.

An agreement on visa exemption for official passport holders, a letter of intent on starting FTA negotiation and three MoUs in the areas of Energy, tourism and customs cooperation were signed at this time. Later, the two leaders addressed the media in a joint press conference. An official luncheon was hosted in honour of the visiting Prime Minister and her delegation.

PREPARATORY MEETINGS BEGIN FOR 15TH SESSION OF OIC ISLAMIC SUMMIT IN BANJUL

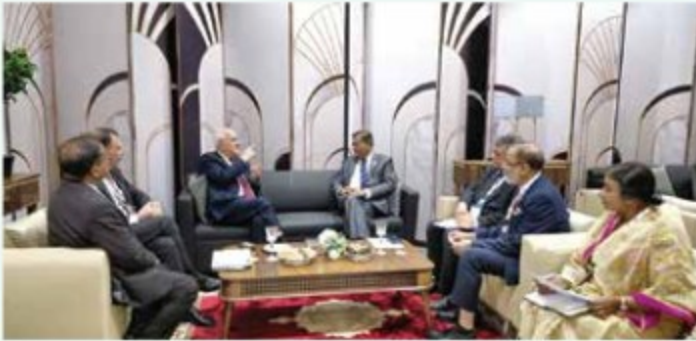


The preparatory meetings for the 15th Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Islamic Summit have commenced in Banjul, The Gambia. Led by H.E. Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary) of Bangladesh, the two-day Senior Officials Meeting aims to enhance unity and solidarity through dialogue for sustainable development.

Key participants include H.E. Dr. Javed Patwary, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the OIC, as well as H.E. Mr. Masudur Rahman, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Nigeria and Non-Resident High Commissioner of Bangladesh to The Gambia, and Ms. Wahida Ahmed, Director General (International Organizations) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Senior Officials Meeting is focused on finalizing crucial documents such as the "Draft Resolution on the issue of Palestine and Al-Quds Ash-Sharif," the "Draft Final Communique," and the "Banjul Draft Declaration," which will be adopted by the Preparatory Meeting of the Foreign Ministers. Discussions are dominated by issues concerning Palestine, particularly in light of recent atrocities in Gaza. Additionally, economic, humanitarian, social, cultural, women, and youth issues impacting the Muslim Ummah are also on the agenda.

FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSES MUSLIM UNITY AS KEY TO RESOLVING PALESTINIAN CRISIS



During the Pre-Preparatory Foreign Ministerial Meeting of the 15th OIC Summit, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmood emphasized the pivotal role of Muslim unity in addressing the Palestinian crisis. In a bilateral meeting with the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, H.E. Riyad Mansour, Mahmood reiterated Bangladesh's steadfast support for Palestine, echoing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's unwavering backing. Stressing the urgency of the situation, Mahmood called upon OIC member states to unite and take decisive actions against Israeli aggression, aiming for a permanent resolution to the longstanding conflict.

U.S. EMBASSY DHAKA PARTNERS WITH RED CRESCENT SOCIETY FOR VITAL BLOOD DRIVE



The U.S. Embassy in Dhaka has teamed up with the Red Crescent Society of Bangladesh to host a crucial blood drive aimed at bolstering community health. Ambassador Peter Haas of the United States to the People's Republic of Bangladesh led by example, donating blood voluntarily as part of the initiative. The drive seeks to support patients grappling with thalassemia-related illnesses and reinforce field hospitals in Cox's Bazar catering to Rohingya refugees. This collaborative effort underscores the importance of donating blood to ensure the well-being of communities in Bangladesh.

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING STRENGTHENS NEPAL-BANGLADESH YOUTH AND SPORTS RELATIONS



Ambassador Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari called on Minister of Youth and Sports and President of Bangladesh Cricket Board H.E. Mr. Nazmul Hassan, MP today.

Views on strengthening Nepal-Bangladesh linkages in the fields of youth and sports were exchanged on the occasion.

BANGLADESH AND AUSTRALIA WOMEN'S CRICKET TEAMS MEET PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA



Bangladesh and Australia women's national cricket teams paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

They exchanged greetings with the Premier at Ganabhaban.

During the meeting, the prime minister highlighted various steps taken for the development of cricket and other sports in Bangladesh, said PM's Deputy Press Secretary KM Shakhawat Moon at a media briefing.

Sheikh Hasina said her government is sincere about sports and always promotes the development of sports.

In the meeting, Australian women cricketers admired the hospitality of Bangladesh. The PM presented gifts to women cricketers. Later, she participated in the photo session with the women cricketers.

Sports Minister and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan Papon was also present.

AUSTRALIA COMMEMORATES ANZAC DAY TO HONOR SERVICEMEN AND SERVICEWOMEN



Anzac Day holds a special place in the hearts of Australians, serving as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by their servicemen and servicewomen. On this solemn occasion, Australians come together to pay tribute to the courage and selflessness displayed by those who have served their nation, as well as those who continue to do so.

Anzac Day is marked by personal reflection, as individuals across Australia remember the bravery and loyalty of the Anzacs—the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps—who fought side by side in conflicts around the world. The Anzac spirit, characterized by loyalty, selflessness, and courage, resonates deeply with Australians and embodies the values they hold dear.

As the nation pauses to remember the sacrifices of its servicemen and servicewomen, the words "Lest We Forget" serve as a solemn pledge to honor their memory and uphold the enduring legacy of the Anzacs. Through commemorative services, ceremonies, and acts of remembrance, Australians demonstrate their unwavering respect for those who have served and their commitment to preserving the Anzac spirit for generations to come.

BANGLADESH AND GREECE PLEDGE BILATERAL COOPERATION DURING ATHENS MEETING



On Tuesday, April 16, 2024, Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Dr. Hassan Mahmud and his Greek counterpart George Gerapetritis vowed to enhance cooperation in migration, trade, shipping, and energy infrastructure during a meeting held in Athens. They discussed the importance of bilateral trade and agreed to explore opportunities for Greek businesses to import Bangladeshi goods. Greece also pledged to recruit Bangladeshi professionals and workers for various sectors. Both ministers highlighted the significance of cooperation in the shipping industry and committed to building a legal framework to facilitate it.

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH BOOKS: MYANMAR RECEIVES GENEROUS DONATION OF BANGLADESHI LITERATURE FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND MUTUAL PROSPERITY



The aim was to share our rich culture, ornate literature and triumphed history with the new generation of Myanmar for a better understanding and mutual prosperity of the two neighbouring countries. Myanmar's Deputy Minister for Ministry of Religious Affairs & Culture of Myanmar was present at the handing-over ceremony.

During the handing over programme more than 100 titles with multiple copies covering economic development, independence struggle of Bangladesh, language, history, art, culture, literary works and trends, festivals, natural beauty, touristic places, rural development were donated to the library. Two large book shelves were also donated to the library to showcase the books which will be named as 'Know Bangladesh'. As a token of donation, "The Unfinished Memoirs" of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and "The Quest for Vision 2021" by the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were formally handed over.

While I visited the library earlier, I found only one book title on Bangladesh by catalogue searching, that too was a 1994 publication.

The initiative of the Embassy will help to strengthen political, economic, and social ties for long-term stability and prosperity. The Embassy will also donate some books to the Yangon-based National Library soon.

BANGLADESH-NETHERLANDS FORGE AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP: AMBASSADOR IRMA VAN DUEREN AND MINISTER DR. MD ABDUS SHAHID PLEDGE COLLABORATION FOR INNOVATION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE



29 April 2024, Ambassador Irma van Dueren paid a courtesy visit to Honorable Agriculture Minister Dr. Md Abdus Shahid, in his office. Both of them recognized the importance of collaboration in the field of agriculture between the Netherlands and Bangladesh.

The Ambassador expressed that Netherlands has different types of cooperation with Bangladesh: knowledge to knowledge institutions (K2K), Government to Government (G2G) and business-to-business (B2B). A good example is the wide use of Dutch potato seeds in Bangladesh and the cooperation between Wageningen and Dhaka Universities. The exchange includes many areas such as agricultural research, innovation, technology transformation, and challenges of climate change.

The Honorable Minister is planning to visit the Netherlands next week and will have good collaborative programs with Wageningen University and Research (WUR) amongst others.

They also agreed to attend later this week the inauguration of the onion storage facility at Giant Agro in Bhakuka, Mymensingh as a partner in the Onion Impact Cluster implemented between the embassy and Bangladeshi partners.

INDIA AND BANGLADESH OFFICIALS DISCUSS RENEWAL OF CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR CIVIL SERVANTS

India, met with H.E. Mr. Farhad Hossain, Hon'ble Minister of Public Administration of Bangladesh, and H.E. Mr. Mohammed Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury, Senior Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration (MOPA) of Bangladesh.

The focus of the discussion was on renewing the MoU between the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) of India and the Ministry of Public Administration of Bangladesh. This MoU facilitates Capacity Building Training Programmes for Bangladesh Civil Servants. Additionally, both sides explored new areas for future cooperation in capacity building.

Since 2014, approximately 2600 Bangladesh Civil Servants have benefited from 71 capacity building programmes conducted under the existing MoU. This collaboration highlights the commitment of both countries to strengthen governance and administration by investing in the professional development of civil servants.

High-level officials from India and Bangladesh met in Dhaka to discuss the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at enhancing the capacity of civil servants in Bangladesh. H.E. Shri V. Srinivas, Secretary of the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) of the Government of

SWEDEN RENEWS COLLABORATION WITH BRAC JAMES P GRANT SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND BANGLADESH HEALTH WATCH TO ADVANCE HEALTHCARE STANDARDS IN BANGLADESH, PAVING THE WAY FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

Over the next two years, our collaborative efforts will be dedicated to actively promoting Universal Health Coverage (UHC), a vital step towards ensuring health for all. A key aspect of our mission is to amplify the voice of the people. This initiative aims to empower individuals, strengthen community engagement, and foster a sense of shared responsibility. By doing so, we contribute to the enhancement of transparency and accountability within the healthcare system.

Join us in embracing this World Health Day and supporting the journey towards Universal Health Coverage. Together, let's build a future where quality healthcare is a fundamental right accessible to every individual.

Sweden renewed its cooperation with BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health and Bangladesh Health Watch to elevate the standard of healthcare in Bangladesh.



Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP
Fmr. Foreign Minister, GoB
Founder & Fmr. Editor



Abul Hasan Chowdhury
Fmr. State Minister, GoB
Executive Advisor



Shahed Akhtar
Ambassador & Fmr. Secretary,
GoB & Editor



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Apt-E1, House-133 (Level-4), Road-04, Block-A,
Banani, Dhaka-1213.

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